

**City of Sterling Heights
ETHNIC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

Official minutes of the Thursday, September 4, 2014 regular meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sharron Allen
Mohammed Alomari
Omie Brooks
Ann Jerzowski
Andrew Pulford
Iqbal Singh

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ike Cabase
Susan Kattula
Doug Najor
Dr. Steve Naumovski

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Citizen Services Specialist Sue Giallombardo
Community Relations Director Steve Guitar

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda: MOTION by Pulford, SECONDED by Alomari.
Approved 6-0

4. Approval of Minutes: MOTION by Jerzowski, SECONDED by Pulford. Approved 6-0, as amended per Singh and Alomari.

5. Communication from Citizens:

- Jasmine Dulfus attended the meeting; she is interested in being appointed to the Ethnic Community Committee. Dulfus was a defense contractor for 13 years and is now a realtor.
- Shawn Taylor is also in attendance, and is interested in joining the committee. Taylor owns a business that helps entrepreneurs start and grow their business.

6. Communications from the Sterling Heights Police Dept.-Sgt. Jim Selewski:

- Selewski stated that he will soon be promoted to Lieutenant, and October will be the final meeting he will be attending. Sgt. Linda Deprez will be taking his place as liaison.

- Selewski stated that he has enjoyed acting as the committee's liaison for the past four years. He added that the police department will be going through a major succession plan over the next five years and he will be involved in the hiring process. Selewski said that changes need to be made to the hiring model so that the police force will better represent the demographics of the city. Selewski stated that his experience with the committee will help in the process and asked that members let him know if they have any suggestions.
- Singh commended Sgt. Selewski for taking part and recognizing that changes need to be made.
- Alomari asked Selewski what do officers do when an interpreter is needed.
- Selewski stated that the officer can make a phone call to an interpreter service, although it's not a very effective system. They are looking for other alternatives.
- Selewski reported that nothing too significant happened during the summer months.
- Selewski wanted to thank Susan Kattula for assisting the police department and the Chaldean community during two peaceful marches that took place recently. Officers were on sight to assist with traffic control and pedestrian overflow. Two minor arrests were made, but were not connected to the marchers.
- Guitar mentioned that he has met with Chief Reese and Nick Najjar (a Sterling Heights resident and an active member of the Chaldean community). They are forming a focus group involving key members of the community, that will work together to better prepare for future events.
- Singh asked if the committee could be notified as to the date of the first meeting with the focus group.

7. Agenda

A. Approval of Meeting dates for fiscal year 2014/2015 (See attached)

- Jerzowski asked if the March meeting date should be changed due to the fact that the Cultural Exchange is on March 13, 2015.
- Members decided to keep the March meeting as scheduled, to finalize details for the Cultural Exchange.
- Pulford made a motion to change the December meeting from December 4th, to December 2nd, due to the Diversity Awards being presented at the City Council meeting on December 2nd. Motion was seconded by Singh. Motion passed: 6-0.

B. 2014 Diversity Distinction Awards

- Giallombardo said that nominations are now being accepted for the Diversity Distinction Awards and that she will send out a press release.
- Nominees must either live in the city or do business with residents of the city. Nominees can be an individual, a business or an organization.
- Pulford suggested that the committee discuss the idea of limiting the number of recipients. Item will be placed on the October agenda.
- Nominations must be submitted by Friday, October 31. Members will select the winners at the November meeting.

C. Welcoming Michigan – National Welcoming Week

- Giallombardo extended an invitation to the committee members to attend a Welcoming Michigan Convening on September 15. The event will be held at Wayne State Community College in Detroit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The purpose of the event is to bring together municipal and community leaders from cities across Michigan to share best practices for immigrant integration and creating immigrant-friendly communities.
- Giallombardo asked if any member was interested in sitting in on the panel discussion, to discuss the goals, mission and accomplishments of the Ethnic Community Committee. Pulford kindly offered. Giallombardo will forward his contact information to Christine Suave.
- Giallombardo and Guitar will also attend the event.
- Please contact Giallombardo if you would like to attend and she will RSVP on your behalf.
- Giallombardo stated that she received a banner, t-shirts and buttons promoting National Welcoming Week, and asked members to convene outside after the meeting for a photo that will be used in a press release.

8. Receipt of Correspondence:

- Alomari stated that the Arab American & Chaldean Council Civic Humanitarian Awards will be on October 4 in Detroit. He added that this is a very nice event and please contact him if you would like to attend and he will give you more details.

9. New Business:

- Pulford asked if committee members could receive business cards to hand out to residents at events.
- Guitar said that the city would print business cards for those who wanted them and if so, please let Giallombardo know what contact information you would like on the cards.

10. Old Business:

- Jerzowski stated that the donation boxes at the Cultural Exchange were much lower than last year. She suggested that members of the committee nudge guests to donate at next year's event. This topic will be re-visited prior to next year's cultural exchange.
- Giallombardo thanked members for participating in Sterlingfest and said that the Naturalization Ceremony was once again successful. Singh said that he was unable to attend the event because he had a work-related emergency.
- Jerzowski apologized to Singh for not being able to cover her shift on Saturday.
- Allen stated that Sterlingfest weekend is one of the bigger events of the year and the committee should be more involved.
- Members in attendance were able to sell ten t-shirts with the "One Nation" logo; Giallombardo will order additional shirts for next year.

- Pulford asked if Community Relations was able to secure a copy of Martin Manna's presentation at the Breakfast of Nations. Guitar stated that there is no copy available.
- Pulford asked about the "Getting to Know Your Neighbor" brochures and when they can be updated.
- Giallombardo stated that she will try to get started on those as soon as possible. They need to be re-created from scratch and updated to include current facts and information. Giallombardo will bring some samples to the October meeting and details can be discussed further.
- Alomari asked the status on the community brochures for different diverse groups and have they been printed in various languages. This brochure will help educate residents with proper ordinances relating to yard maintenance, trash pick-up, outdoor storage and parking issues.
- Guitar stated that Community Relations is currently working on that and hopes to have it completed early in the winter months, and ready for spring distribution.
- Once the brochure is complete, the committee can discuss the best way to distribute the brochure and what languages would be most beneficial and helpful.
- Sean Taylor asked how long the committee has been in existence and how the make-up of the group was targeted.
- Allen stated that the committee has been in place for approx. 20 years. The make-up and diversity of the group just fell into place; she added that it's changed over the years but has always represented many groups in the city.

11. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.